



CONNECTICUT

In-Home Assistance LLC

Raised Bill #911

February 24, 2011

My name is William Wieland (Renny) and I have been involved with Home Health Care for most of my working life. I was the Executive Director of a Visiting Nurse Association for eighteen years and I now own and operate a private duty home care agency in Trumbull, CT which I began 11 years ago.

I have frequently observed the confusion that much of the public has in trying to differentiate the categories of home care services. Certified home health agencies, private duty home care agencies and referral or placement agencies sometimes all seem to be the same entity to many of those seeking homecare.

Our agency receives many calls from the seniors we service who were not aware that they had to reimburse their aides directly when they come from a registry and are classified as independent contractors. Further confusion comes when the unsuspecting senior is informed that they have become the employer with all of the attendant responsibilities. Many of the frail elderly whom we serve are more than willing to accept help in their homes without questioning the employment relationship the caregiver brings with them.

The pamphlets and literature handed out to the senior audience all reflect advertising which purports them to specialize in home care services for the elderly without mentioning the independent status of the caregiver being sent out. Most of the time independent contractor aides lack supervision and in many instances are without criminal background checks or even references on file. We are aware of this because many have sought employment with our agency.

A classic example of this type of service being rendered without proper supervision occurred in Bridgeport several years ago when a male aide in his 30's was sent out by a registry to care for a frail elderly female in her 80's. This woman lived in an apartment with her granddaughter. The male aide was in the process of raping the grandmother when the granddaughter arrived home from school. Obviously, an arrest was made in this case. However, the question remains, was a criminal background check performed?

Was this aide now an employee of the grandmother and was she aware of it?
What type of professional liability insurance was available and who carried it?
Why was a male aide sent out to care for an elderly woman in the first place? This does not meet the standard for safe home practice.

Misleading advertising can lead to extreme situations such as this. The public should be fully aware of the type of service they are subscribing to and fully understand their own responsibility in choosing a registry or placement service.

W. Rennard Wieland, President/Owner